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Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez ..... (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.00 a.m.

Agenda item 27: Advancement of women (A/71/38, A/71/209, A/71/219, A/71/223, A/71/306 and A/71/398)

1. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the seventy-first session of the General Assembly was a crucial opportunity to review progress and identify new opportunities for advancing women's rights and achieving the goals of the "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality" campaign. The Third Committee would play an important role in those processes. The high-level summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants held in September 2016 provided a solid basis for action to uphold the rights of women and girls fleeing situations of conflict. UN-Women was ready to support the crafting of the proposed compacts on migrants and refugees.

2. If equality was to be achieved, women's economic empowerment was essential. The key messages of the interim report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment should be catalysts for the work of the current session. Women everywhere continued to struggle for equal pay, and women entrepreneurs lacked access to finance, while discrimination and structural barriers affected women in the informal sector and those performing domestic and unpaid care work. The consensus that economies performed better when women and men could participate on an equal basis must guide action. The roadmap adopted at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women should be the basis for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Efforts to collect and use gender statistics should be stepped up; the Entity's flagship initiative "Making Every Woman and Girl Count" and its recently launched partnership on gender statistics demonstrated how statistics could be used effectively.

3. Legal frameworks that did not discriminate against women and actively protected women's rights were essential. Laws restricting women's rights in any area of life must be repealed. Domestic legal frameworks must accelerate progress towards gender equality through affirmative action and by supporting women's equal participation in all aspects of leadership and decision-making, access to economic and financial resources, and the right to live free from violence.

4. Violence against women kept them from realizing their rights and incurred quantifiable costs for society as a whole. The three reports of the Secretary-General on that subject made it clear that, despite some progress, much remained to be done to ensure that women and girls could enjoy the right to live free from violence. The report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (A/71/219) stressed that weak law enforcement remained a challenge. The report on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations (A/71/209) made it clear that the complex nature of violence against women, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilations, required a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. The report on trafficking in women and girls (A/71/223) deserved particular attention in view of the intensification of migrant flows, which heightened the risk of women and girls being trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced marriage.

5. Action on gender issues must be prioritized under each of the Sustainable Development Goals so that measurable progress for women and girls could be made by 2020. At the 2015 Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, 72 heads of State and Government had promised to prioritize gender when implementing the 2030 Agenda and 24 had provided updates on progress one year later. Achievements to date included the establishment of national action plans and legislation to end violence against women, the provision of services for survivors of such violence and improved quota provisions for women's representation in elected bodies. The highest level of government should be accountable for gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Despite many challenges, such as armed conflicts and growing inequality, the current unprecedented level of commitment to gender equality meant that change was possible.

6. **Ms. Kanem** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on intensifying efforts to end obstetric fistula (A/71/306), said that despite

considerable progress over the past two years towards reducing maternal mortality and disabilities, much more remained to be done to eliminate obstetric fistula by 2030. Women with obstetric fistula were left physically, mentally and emotionally scarred, and most often rejected by their husbands and communities and forced to live in isolation. Virtually eliminated in many countries, obstetric fistula continued to affect poor, vulnerable and marginalized women and girls in the developing world and was therefore a stark manifestation of health inequity. The international community must act urgently to eliminate such needless suffering.

7. UNFPA was working with the International Confederation of Midwives and other partners in the Global Midwifery Programme to help States strengthen their midwifery programmes and policies in light of the frontline role played by midwives in saving the lives of mothers and babies. Every pregnancy and birth could be safe if the international community committed to protecting the human rights, well-being and dignity of every woman and girl everywhere.

8. **Mr. Coloma Grimberg** (Chile) asked for more information regarding the cause of obstetric fistula, the services needed to treat it and whether those services existed.

9. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that migrant women and children were especially vulnerable and were at risk of being exploited by people trafficking networks. He asked the Deputy Executive Director to comment on the need for all relevant United Nations agencies, and in particular UN-Women, to address the need to protect migrant women.

10. **Ms. Kanem** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) explained that obstetric fistula was caused by a prolonged and difficult labour that resulted in a rupture of the birth canal. Prevention was key, as many of the contributory factors were preventable. It occurred much more frequently in younger mothers: teenagers were highly vulnerable to the pressure created and were likely to experience ruptures. The rupture led to negative social consequences, such as isolation, because it caused incontinence. Skilled obstetric care was needed, and surgery could remedy the problem so that the women could reintegrate into society. However, the necessary surgery was not readily available enough.

11. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) said that UN-Women would continue to collaborate with other agencies working on migration in relation to factors such as development and trafficking.

12. **Ms. Hayashi** (Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that, prior to making a commitment to Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, 189 Member States had already committed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by becoming parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Committee, in its concluding observations based on States parties' periodic reports, systematically called for the realization of gender equality throughout implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in 2016 it had begun including references to specific Goals in its observations as a pilot exercise. It had also started to include a systematic reference to indicator 5.1.1 (regarding legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex) in the lists of issues and questions used in the review of State party reports.

13. Since the Convention was the only human rights instrument that provided comprehensive protection of the human rights of women, it should serve as a source for identifying the new areas to be covered by the legal frameworks envisaged in indicator 5.1.1. The Committee was ready to contribute to the process of follow-up and review of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that connection, it would provide input for the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would focus on poverty eradication.

14. The Committee had issued a joint statement with the Committee on Migrant Workers, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Women to mark the occasion of the high-level summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants, welcoming the political will expressed in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants . In the statement, States were called on to: adopt gender-responsive, rights-based policies to address the root causes of forced movements of refugees and migrants; ensure women's full and equal participation in the

formulation of such policies as well as in conflict prevention and resolution; and recognize the contribution of refugee and migrant women to global economic growth and sociocultural progress.

15. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women focused on refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women in many of its concluding observations, which addressed rights violations such as sexual violence and abusive working conditions. The Committee's recommendations to curb such violations included the provision of free legal aid and information in the relevant languages, and regulation and monitoring of recruitment agencies. In its work on individual communications under article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and in its concluding observations, the Committee had repeatedly called on States to comply with the principle of non-refoulement; 5 of the 10 final decisions on individual communications adopted over the past year concerned non-refoulement. The root causes of large-scale population movements were diverse, and they included discrimination, gender-based violence, exploitation, climate change and environmental degradation. The Committee would continue to seek to strengthen States' accountability for addressing those root causes and protecting the rights of refugee and migrant women and girls.

16. Migration also affected women and girls who stayed behind, including rural women, who tended to be disproportionately affected by a lack of infrastructure and services. In March 2016, the Committee had adopted general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, providing guidance to States parties on their obligations, which included ensuring that rural women had access to political life and adequate living conditions. The Committee was updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, a process which had begun in 2015. The updated version would address violence in all areas of life — including cyberspace — and in relation to such phenomena as migration. The Committee was also working on a general recommendation on women's and girls' right to education. It was desperately needed as 41 million girls worldwide continued to be denied access to primary education. Lastly, it was drafting a general recommendation on disaster risk reduction and women and girls, to address the intersecting forms of discrimination that were compounded in crisis situations. The Committee would invite States parties to comment and hold regional-level consultations on the draft recommendation.

17. Regarding treaty body strengthening and cooperation with partners, the Committee continued to enhance the structure of its dialogues with States parties, had decided to limit the length of its concluding observations, and had streamlined its procedures for assessing States parties' follow-up reports and adopting lists of issues and questions for the simplified reporting procedure. Along with the additional meeting time granted under General Assembly resolution 68/268, those measures had enabled the Committee to slightly reduce its backlog of State reports.

18. **Mr. Kelly** (Ireland) said that Ireland had advocated the inclusion of a goal on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Gender equality was a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development and could only be achieved if the rights of all members of society were respected.

19. Civil society organizations, which had a key role to play in highlighting discrimination against women, were operating in an increasingly restrictive and dangerous environment. The commitment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to addressing reprisals sent an important message of support to civil society organizations and human rights defenders. He welcomed the Committee's cooperation with civil society organizations, including the updating of general recommendation 19 on violence against women. In that connection, he asked Ms. Hayashi to elaborate on the scope for further developing engagement between civil society organizations and the treaty monitoring bodies, and whether more systematic engagement would strengthen their respective roles.

20. **Ms. Omiya** (Japan) said that she appreciated the Committee's efforts to refer to specific Sustainable Development Goals in its concluding observations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be implemented through concrete measures. Japan had established national headquarters for the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals and was working

to implement each Goal, including Goal 5. She asked Ms. Hayashi how individual Governments should cooperate with the Committee.

21. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland), highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming in security and counter-extremism strategies, said that women's participation in such efforts should be encouraged. She asked Ms. Hayashi what role the Committee should play in discussing those issues with States Parties.

22. Since 2014, States Parties had been able to use the simplified reporting procedure for national reports, yet the number of reports pending review by the Committee had increased. She asked the Committee to provide more information on its experience with the simplified reporting procedure and explain the reason for the increased number of pending State reports.

23. **Ms. Seppäläinen** (European Union) said that her delegation appreciated the fact that, in addition to its regular work, the Committee had held public meetings with civil society organizations and national human rights institutions. She noted with appreciation the Committee's consideration of eight State reports submitted under article 18 of the Convention, the adoption of a statement on 20 November 2015 on the refugee crises and the protection of women and girls, and the Committee's repeated entreaties to all States Parties to refrain from invoking customs or religious considerations to justify non-compliance with their legal obligations under the Convention.

24. Noting with interest general recommendation 33 on women's access to justice, she commended the seriousness with which the Committee addressed reprisals or intimidation against individuals or groups seeking to cooperate with the Committee. She asked Ms. Hayashi to provide more information on the challenges of ensuring women's access to justice and possible solutions.

25. The Committee had taken steps to implement General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, including by introducing the simplified reporting procedure. She asked Ms. Hayashi to elaborate on the effects that measures taken under resolution 68/268 had had on the Committee's work and its cooperation with other human rights treaty bodies.

26. **Ms. Kofoed** (Denmark) said that the Sustainable Development Goals highlighted the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, which was a pre-condition for achieving sustainable development. Despite some progress, however, discriminatory laws continued to curtail women's freedom of movement, enjoyment of economic and political rights, and access to and control over basic resources and services. Women accounted for the bulk of the world's poor, despite working more hours than men; many girls were forced into early marriage; and female representation in parliaments remained low. She asked Ms. Hayashi to elaborate on the areas that needed to be prioritized in order to ensure the implementation of target 5.1 of the Goals on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, as well as the need to combat gender stereotypes.

27. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that the effective and equal participation of women in public and economic life was an essential element of good governance, effective democracy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Tackling violence against women remained a top priority for the United Kingdom and progress had been made: prosecutions of the perpetrators of such violence were at an all-time high and the law on domestic abuse had been strengthened. Commending the Committee for its approach to tackling reprisals and intimidation against individuals or groups seeking to cooperate with the Committee, he asked Ms. Hayashi to elaborate on particular issues of concern in that regard and what States Parties could do to ensure that all women everywhere were able to engage with its work.

28. **Ms. Jazukevičiūtė** (Lithuania) said that the work of the Committee was an important basis for evaluating progress made by States Parties in achieving target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. She commended the Committee for its involvement in the development of indicator 5.1.1 on the existence of legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. She asked Ms. Hayashi to elaborate on the Committee's contribution to the implementation of the

Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 5.1. In addition, given that data collection and information sharing were crucial to the implementation of target 5.1, she asked Ms. Hayashi to provide more information on cooperation and systematic exchange of information between the Committee and other treaty bodies, especially in the light of resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

29. **Ms. Dravec** (Slovenia) said that the national development strategy of Slovenia, currently at the drafting stage, the national programme and action plan for equality between men and women and the act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex would all help the country to implement the Committee's recommendations. Noting with appreciation the adoption of general recommendation 33 on women's access to justice and general recommendation 34 on the rights of rural women, she asked the Chair if she could provide examples of successful efforts to address gender stereotypes in judicial systems and specify which forms of discrimination facing rural women and girls were the most pressing and required urgent attention.

30. **Ms. Simenstad** (Norway) said that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its general recommendation 19 on violence against women, had addressed a form of discrimination that was not covered in the Convention but had been included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under target 5.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls everywhere.

31. Welcoming the Committee's intention to contribute to the indicators for target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, she asked Ms. Hayashi what modalities existed for the Committee to interact with the Statistical Commission, which was responsible for drafting the indicators. Noting the interaction of the Committee with other treaty bodies that dealt with issues related to women's rights, she asked if there was a need to ensure coherence in that regard and whether the current set-up was satisfactory.

32. **Ms. Hayashi** (Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), responding to questions, said that the Committee was one of the pioneering bodies in efforts to strengthen the treaty bodies. For instance, prior to the adoption of resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the Committee had already agreed to have its summary records issued in English only and had reduced the word limit for concluding observations to 6,000 words. The Committee had also introduced the simplified reporting procedure, which could be used only for States Parties that had submitted a core report within the previous five years. As civil society participation in the Committee's public meetings was important, the Committee also held informal briefings for non-governmental organizations and organized meetings between members of the Committee and civil society actors. Such engagement should be maintained under the treaty body strengthening procedure.

33. In 2015 the human rights treaty bodies had adopted a set of guidelines against intimidation or reprisals. The Committee had not appointed a special rapporteur on reprisals but the Bureau would monitor reprisals and decisions would be made in plenary should any specific cases be reported.

34. In response to the questions on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee was working with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to provide input on the indicators to the Statistical Commission and the high-level political forum on sustainable development. At the domestic level, States Parties should have basic laws and policies in place that prohibited discrimination against women, promoted empowerment, guarded against reprisals and gave a voice to civil society, with a view to ensuring that no one was left behind.

35. Regarding access to justice, the continued existence of discriminatory laws and customs was of great concern. It was vital to put an end to discriminatory practices justified on cultural grounds and ensure that judges and legal professionals received training.

36. Lastly, regarding coherence with other treaty bodies, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights subsidized joint meetings of the human rights treaty bodies, and the Committee was investigating possibilities for further collaboration to ensure that the principle of gender

equality was taken into account by the other treaty bodies.

37. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) said that UN-Women worked closely with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to strengthen normative intergovernmental support to States Parties, improve data collection and broaden the knowledge base. UN-Women also worked on the ground to support States Parties in the preparation of their State reports and to engage with civil society with a view to assessing the extent to which States Parties were meeting their obligations under the Convention.

38. **Ms. Šimonović** (Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences) introducing her report on violence against women, its causes and consequences (A/71/398), said that during her mandate she would focus on topics that included protection and services for female survivors of violence; a possible global code of conduct for security and police forces; violence against women in the context of forced displacement and refugee flows; the connections between fundamentalism or extremism and gender-based violence against women, as well as its root causes; capacity-building for legal professionals and law enforcement officials dealing with violence against women; the new challenge posed by online violence against women; elimination of discriminatory laws and their negative impact in perpetuating or contributing to violence against women; and violence against women in politics.

39. The first section of the report provided an update regarding the adequacy of the legal framework on violence against women, taking into account the views of global and regional mechanisms. Member States and other interested stakeholders were providing input on five questions relating to the potential need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women, and input from other States or regional groups would be welcomed.

40. In November 2015, she had called on all States to establish a "femicide watch" as femicide, the killing of women because of their sex or gender was one of the focus areas of her mandate. Her report provided guidance to States on modalities to establish a femicide watch and acknowledged the key steps taken at the intergovernmental level to combat femicide. Gender-based violence was recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a major obstacle to social and economic development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, the eliminating of femicide was key to Goals 11 and 16. An established femicide watch could thus be part of the process of monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and be supported by all relevant United Nations agencies, including UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

41. Existing good practices on femicide included the Domestic Violence Fatality Review in Washington State in the United States of America and the Femicide Census project in the United Kingdom, and, at the regional level, the Latin American Model Protocol for the investigation of gender-related killings of women. States and other stakeholders should provide examples of other good practices or existing legislative initiatives.

42. Various international, regional, and national courts had also created jurisprudence on femicide. An online collection of landmark court cases on femicides would be made publicly available so that judges working on such cases would have access to them. Further examples from regional and national courts would be welcomed.

43. Femicide watches or observatories on violence against women could be established as separate mechanisms or instead be attached to existing national mechanisms or observatories on violence against women. Femicide watches or review panels should be established as interdisciplinary bodies. Additionally, the mere existence of femicide watches and observatories on violence against women would increase awareness of femicide and galvanize actions to prevent it.

44. In the preceding year, she had visited South Africa and Georgia and had presented the relevant country visit reports in June 2016 at the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council. More recently, she had visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory/State of Palestine and would report to the Human Rights Council in June 2017 on that visit. She

would be conducting visits to Argentina, Australia, the Bahamas and Bulgaria in the near future.

45. **Mr. Coloma Grimberg** (Chile) said that his country was one of 14 Latin American and Caribbean States among the 25 States with the world's highest rates of femicide. Chile would do everything possible to combat that extreme violence and help the Special Rapporteur in her work. As female genital mutilation was also of concern to Chile, he would welcome information on the subject, including on actions being taken to combat it.

46. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that the late issuance of the Special Rapporteur's report had not left enough time for delegations to prepare for the interactive dialogue. In future, it would be helpful if the report could be provided to Member States earlier or the interactive dialogue could be postponed.

47. While there was no normative gap regarding violence against women, the implementation of existing measures remained a problem. The limited resources available should be invested in strengthening existing mechanisms to achieve real gender equality and empowerment of women. Although the general recommendations of treaty bodies were subjective and non-binding, it would be useful for Member States to reach a consensus on their content. Lastly, as previous mandate holders had concentrated solely on violence against women in family settings, the Special Rapporteur should focus specifically on other contexts, such as the workplace.

48. **Ms. Morton** (Australia) said that there was a lack of critical long-term support for survivors in nearly all countries. In Australia at least one woman per week was killed by a partner or former partner, and her delegation was therefore keen for the issue to remain on the agenda. Accountability must rest at the highest levels of Government, and it should be supported by data collection. Accordingly, Australia was looking into evidence-based preventative measures, and she would welcome information regarding best practices related to the use of evidence in prevention programmes.

49. **Ms. Nescher** (Liechtenstein) said that she would welcome further information on any feedback received regarding the idea of a femicide watch and any statistics that had not yet been published. Verbal and physical violence against women, notably in politics, continued even in countries that had prioritized women's empowerment and gender equality. She asked what caused such violence and how it could be remedied.

50. **Mr. Nuno** (Spain) said that his country's system for eliminating and preventing violence against women was constantly improving. A recent study in Spain on young people, new technologies and gender-based violence had also had a significant social impact. As part of its external human rights policy and in international cooperation, Spain continued to work on the connection between gender-based violence and development, which had been made clear in the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, Spain provided political and financial support for various policies designed to reduce the high level of impunity. In that regard, he wished to highlight the "Recommendations for the effective investigation of the crime of femicide", which were widely available in the Spanish-speaking world, and the model protocol on the investigation of femicide. Unfortunately, data collection was difficult, as many victims of violence still did not file complaints. He asked how progress could be made towards ending that silence.

51. **Ms. Moreiera Costa Pittella** (Brazil) said that in 2015 Brazil had adopted legislation criminalizing femicide and imposing harsher penalties on those who harmed women and girls. The legislation amended the Brazilian criminal code by defining femicide as any crime that involved the assassination of women for gender-related reasons, including domestic violence, discrimination, or contempt for women. However, the State's obligation to protect women extended beyond enacting legislation. Regarding the recommendations on modalities for femicide watch mechanisms, she asked how Member States could coordinate their actions at the regional or global level. More information would be helpful to determine how intergovernmental work could contribute to identifying gaps in the intervention system in order to prevent femicide.

52. **Ms. Tasuja** (Estonia) said it was evident that various groups and committees believed it preferable to strengthen existing United Nations mechanisms on violence against women rather than establish a new convention and related monitoring body. In that regard,

she asked for more information as to why a new legally binding convention might be considered more effective. Furthermore, given the existing shortcomings of the data collection system, she wondered how the unreliability of some information sources could affect the implementation of measures to counter violence against women.

53. **Ms. Simenstad** (Norway) asked whether the recommendations for collective change could be more specific and prioritized, what would be needed to effect such change, and how men could be involved.

54. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that crime data collection was essential for preventing violence and providing services to survivors. Gathering evidence on killings to ascertain common trends could also serve as a model for combating other forms of violence. The Special Rapporteur was correct to emphasize the protection of women and girls in conflict or humanitarian situations as they were among the most vulnerable. It was necessary to raise awareness and develop solutions to address emerging threats against women and girls, such as the growth in online violence which had accompanied increased use of information technologies. Lastly, she asked what would be included in the Special Rapporteur's proposed code of conduct for security and police forces.

55. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that, despite the progress made, the level of violence against women, particularly between intimate partners and within families, remained shockingly high. He would welcome further information about actions to reach the most marginalized women and girls, particularly those most affected by conflict, displacement and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

56. **Ms. Doláková** (Czechia) said that her delegation welcomed the growing attention to preventive measures and data collection, as well as the recognition of gender stereotypes and concepts of masculinity as issues that needed to be addressed. With regard to the recommendation in the Special Rapporteur's report to encourage courts to gain specialized expertise on femicide and violence against women, she wished to know if there were any specific examples of best practice in that area.

57. **Mr. Jelinski** (Canada) said that the risk of violence against women and girls was amplified in conflict or other humanitarian emergencies, and such violence had a negative ripple effect throughout society. The recommendation for a femicide watch recognized not only the lack of reliable data, but also the importance of such data in tackling femicide. In that regard, he would welcome examples of best practices in the collection, analysis and reporting of data that responded to the need for disaggregated information.

58. **Ms. Coroa** (Portugal) said that violence against women and girls was a cross-cutting issue that could occur in any setting, and she would appreciate advice on concrete measures, apart from strong legal frameworks, to eliminate practices, stereotypes and social norms that perpetuated discrimination and violence. Furthermore, given the scope and consequences of violence against women and girls, she asked how Member States could improve existing mechanisms, data collection and analysis in order to accurately measure the magnitude and prevalence of such violence.

59. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives) said that her country's new gender equality act would strongly enhance the legal policy framework for gender equality by providing for full protection of rights and establishing institution-wide compliance mechanisms. However, despite existing stringent laws and policies to prevent violence and protect women and girls, many countries, including the Maldives, were still constrained with regard to providing adequate assistance to deal with such crimes and appropriate support services for victims of violence. The Special Rapporteur could play in an instrumental role in that regard.

60. **Ms. Seppäläinen** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that United Nations bodies had an important role to play in addressing violence against women and girls. Further information on how organizations and Governments could cooperate in data collection would be welcomed. Moreover, combating impunity for crimes against women must remain a priority. In that regard, she asked to hear more about good practices in establishing specialized units, and providing police officers and prosecutors with specific expertise on risk assessment and management.

61. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the tragic situation of the Palestinian population under Israeli occupation was deteriorating on a daily basis. Israeli forces had illegally killed over 20 Palestinian women and girls since October 2015 with total impunity. Recalling the Special Rapporteur's press release of 26 September 2016 touching on the issue of settler violence, including the violence suffered by the teachers and students of Qurduba school in Hebron, she asked what the international community must do to redress the absence of Israeli accountability for the actions of its illegal settler population.

62. **Ms. Koefoed** (Denmark) said that gender-based violence was a worldwide human rights challenge faced by millions of women. Violence against women and girls impeded their achievement of equality, reduced human capital and undermined economic growth. The root causes of discrimination must be addressed through access to education and health care, equal participation in the economy, and criminal accountability for the perpetrators of gender-based violence. Denmark wished to know which awareness-raising and advocacy tools the Special Rapporteur found most effective, and what could be done to combat sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones.

63. **Ms. Dravec** (Slovenia) said that said that zero tolerance of violence against women was a priority for her country's national programme for equality between men and women, 2015-2020. In 2016, the Government had established a working group on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and the working group could be considered a form of observatory. The Government had also made legislative changes recognizing stalking and forced marriage as criminal offences. Slovenia requested the Special Rapporteur to share good practices on femicide watches and observatories on violence against women both regionally and nationally, and to specify the international actions that would ultimately eliminate violence against women and girls by 2030.

64. **Mr. Marani** (Argentina) reaffirmed his country's support for the Special Rapporteur's decision to focus on femicide, an issue of great concern throughout Latin America, and asked how to involve civil society and other actors in the fight against that extreme form of violence against women.

65. **Ms. Sukacheva** (Russian Federation) called on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to issue reports in a timely manner, so that delegations could become familiar with the content. While the prevention of violence against women was addressed in the dialogues between States and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the problem was not a lack of legislative measures but rather a lack of their implementation. Consequently, the focus should be not on developing new international norms or introducing additional monitoring mechanisms on highly specialized topics, which would cause issues to become fragmented and resources to be spread thinly, but rather on implementing existing measures.

66. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that it was sad to hear that the Palestinians were attacking Israel instead of entering negotiations for peace. In Palestinian society, women were restricted to being wives and mothers, and they were subjected to serious violence, including socially acceptable family honour killings. Moreover, women were incited to commit violence against Israel. The delegate asked what the international community would do to change the attitude of Palestinians towards women.

67. **Ms. Šimonović** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences) said that she apologized for her part in the delay in issuing her report in all languages. She had submitted the text for editing and translation prior to her departure on mission to Israel and Palestine. Her report should be considered a living document, and it would be updated when delegations provided information on best practices, legislation and jurisprudence in relation to femicide. She invited all States to focus on implementing the report's recommendations. The proposal to establish a femicide watch would, she hoped, facilitate the collective changes that were needed. Practical implementation mechanisms were required.

68. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur focused on examining the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and identifying modalities that produced results, such as the femicide watch model. The report contained references to examples from the United Kingdom of

models prepared by non-governmental organizations. It was important to begin implementing models and then try to engage Governments, which were ultimately responsible for collecting data and preventing violence. She was cooperating with other United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and she would be reporting to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to work on discriminatory laws concealed in criminal codes.

69. Accurate data were crucial for determining requirements for preventing violence against women, including femicide. In response to Brazil's questions regarding regional cooperation, good practices and better implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, she explained that the femicide watch recommendation was an operational mechanism under Sustainable Development Goal 5. The model presented was flexible and could be implemented in a number of ways, and the same model could be applied to other forms of violence against women in different countries. It was also important to focus on prevention and on taking measures to address victim silence, which was still a challenge with regard to domestic violence.

70. In reply to questions regarding possible elements for a code of conduct, the Special Rapporteur highlighted regional initiatives in Africa and State initiatives relating to a code of conduct for police forces, as officers were often insufficiently sensitive when dealing with violence against women. She hoped that focusing on the issue would lead to the collection of good practices and illustrate how to achieve results, provide good training and formulate good policies. Good models on data collection existed, and she would share additional information on best practices with all States, possibly through her website. She requested information from Spain on best practices for femicide prevention as she was aware of good practices there, and specific data from States on the targeting of marginalized groups of women, including those from certain ethnic groups.

71. It was important to collect jurisprudence at all levels to provide courts with good examples from which to gain specific expertise, which was lacking in most States. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had knowledge of useful cases at regional level that properly reflected the gender perspective in femicide cases. Responding to questions regarding the need for a new United Nations convention or other international instrument, the Special Rapporteur asked all countries and stakeholders to submit their views on the subject.

72. The Special Rapporteur hoped that her next report, due in June 2017, would focus on shelters, protective orders and helplines to raise global awareness of the required standards, as there were no international guidelines. In response to questions from the State of Palestine and Israel, she said that the press release for her report had already been issued and the end-of-mission statement was available on the Special Rapporteur's website. She hoped to participate in a constructive dialogue on the implementation of the recommendations from the report at a later date.

73. Awareness-raising and advocacy should be ongoing and were needed to achieve results in combating violence against women. Her mandate included consideration of all violations of human rights in conflict situations and she would consider that issue in her next report to the Human Rights Council. The role of civil society was crucial, as information from Governments was one-sided. Input from independent human rights institutions and civil society was needed to focus on the real issues, including the fight against extremism. It was also important to address deeply engrained stereotypes.

74. **The Chair** said that, owing to time constraints, the questions posed to the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women would be answered through the Entity's website.

75. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (A/71/398) was a slotted document. The submission date had been 25 July, but the text had been received only on 27 September.

76. **Mr. Plasai** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and further measures to close the remaining gaps in 12 critical areas. The international community must collaborate to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into tangible benefits. As a stand-alone Sustainable

Development Goal and a cross-cutting issue in all other Goals, gender equality and women's empowerment required implementation and follow-up at all levels to address the severe and multifaceted challenges that still impeded progress worldwide.

77. Specific actions were needed to further mainstream the gender perspective in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies. Men and boys should be engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. He called for gender-responsive budgeting initiatives as well as access to basic health care, quality education and training, and supported the political participation of women and their role in promoting peace and security. Further action must be taken to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls through enhanced mechanisms, legislation and funding.

78. The international community must consider increasing international cooperation and global partnership for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the fulfilment of financial and other commitments. Collective actions were required to remove obstacles to the full realization of the rights of women and girls under foreign occupation. An important factor for the advancement of women was an environment that maintained world peace and promoted and protected human rights, democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes. There was a need to strengthen efforts to address the multiple forms of discrimination faced by older women, women with disabilities, and migrant, rural and indigenous women and girls.

79. **Mr. Wafy** (Niger), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the elimination of all forms of violence and exploitation of women and girls would promote their well-being and ensure their full participation in and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Violence against women impeded socioeconomic development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. States should improve and expand girls' education at all levels and encourage women to enter employment as a means of achieving gender equality, empowering women and developing their self-esteem.

80. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (African Union Assembly) had demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment through the adoption of landmark provisions and statutes allowing the respective Governments to work on advancing the status of women in their countries. In June 2015, the African Union Assembly adopted the "Declaration on 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063", in which States committed to helping women develop technical and entrepreneurial skills, increasing direct funding, and challenging banks to observe a minimum quota of 50 per cent for women entrepreneurs when providing finance for business expansion.

81. Noting that most detected human trafficking victims were women and girls, he called on the international community to hold traffickers accountable and provide victims with the necessary support. He appealed to all Member States to implement the 2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and urged the donor community to replenish the Anti-Trafficking Fund.

82. Female genital mutilation and other harmful practices constituted violence against women and girls, and impeded both their empowerment and the achievement of gender equality. States should adopt a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to tackle the criminal, social, cultural and economic aspects of female genital mutilation.

83. Obstetric fistula had catastrophic effects on the health of women and their children, particularly if left untreated. He called for implementation of the commitments made by the international community to provide official development assistance and technology transfer to help meet the requirements for fistula treatment in Africa.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.